



OFFICIAL COVER FOR STATEMENT



KENYA

**STATEMENT BY THE RT. HON. RAILA A. ODINGA,  
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
AT THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM  
FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2009**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express my appreciation to the organizers for the invitation to address this crucial conference.

We are gathered here to discuss an issue that threatens the very survival of millions of people across the world.

As you may be aware, the G8 declared climate change as the world's biggest threat to humankind-a threat far greater than the risk of the deployment or use of nuclear, biological or other weapons of mass destruction.

In Africa, we are caught in this tragic turn of events. What makes it even more tragic for us is that we contribute less than 4 per cent of the greenhouse gases that have polluted the environment and contributed to rising temperatures.

But we are caught in the effects as victims.

In my own country Kenya, we are currently experiencing the worst drought in decades. Coming on top of the violence that swept the nation after the last election, this has substantially diminished the resilience of communities to recover and rebuild livelihoods.

We are experiencing many other effects of climate change. The return periods of floods are getting shorter, droughts are lasting longer and maximum temperature records are being broken as a matter of course.

What has occurred in Kenya has been replicated in far too many other African countries. Poverty is escalating, diseases such as cholera and highland malaria are spreading. Social and political fabrics are under severe strain from diminishing outputs that result from such disasters.

While we are all caught in the web of the consequences of climate change, the developed world is better prepared to cope with its challenges.

I believe that Africa's disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation strategies must focus on poverty alleviation, food security, attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and the vulnerable groups, especially women and children.

It is for this reason that Africa's leaders are taking the initiative on the issue by providing direction, driving policy and harmonizing their common programs for coordinated implementation.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation efforts will require a serious coordination at the local, national, and regional levels in order to be effective.

To the extent that disasters and climate change are development challenges, all sectors need to be engaged and coordination needs to take place at a higher level than a single Ministry. In undertaking Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Action Plans we must ensure that they are fully

integrated in the planning process and reflected in the national budgets.

The African Union therefore has made disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation its highest priorities. The summit of African heads of state has determined that the Continent will speak with one voice in order to produce a genuinely global outcome in Copenhagen which will cushion the vulnerable poor in Africa.

In that regard, I am working to rally support for this African position prior to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

I am pleased to inform this forum that my counterpart from Chad, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister H.E. Youssouf Saleh Abbas has taken on the role of lead champion for the Central African Region. In July, he will be hosting the African Parliamentarians Initiative on Climate Change to lend support to the consolidation of an African position. At a recent meeting in Nairobi, I urged African parliamentarians to become change agents and bring policymakers closer to the climate change adaptation debate.

Africa and the developing world need support. We are particularly asking the developed countries to own up to their historical role in causing climate change and support our efforts to adapt to it.

Part of our plan in Africa is to recognize that the foundation for tomorrow must be laid today. We believe that we must start

creating, nurturing and inculcating a culture of environmental, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation awareness for our future generations.

In this regard, I wish to recognize and bring to your attention an initiative by the African Parliamentarians dubbed “BLACK AND GREEN-READY TO LEAD” campaign to be launched in October 2009. This initiative will create a sustained marketing, public relations and awareness campaign across all levels of society on the African Continent on disaster risk reduction and adaptation.

As I conclude, I wish to pay my sincere gratitude to the collective efforts of our support partners in these endeavors. I wish to recognise:

(i) : The UNISDR for its untiring support for the African Parliamentarians Initiatives on Development of a Pan African position.

(ii) : The African negotiators under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), UNEP, UNECA, African Union (AU), African Development Bank(AfDB), COMESA and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) amongst others, for their technical, and intellectual and financial support in the development of this common platform.

We welcome other partners to team up with us in providing homegrown solutions to the challenges in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

Finally, I call upon Africa's leadership to take up the challenge "ONE AFRICA, BLACK AND READY TO GO GREEN."

Thank you.